Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators
Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators
Joint EGTI/EGH subgroup on the ICT Development Index (IDI)

Report of activities for the 2026 work period

August 2026

Outline

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This report summarises the activities of the joint subgroup on the ICT Development Index (IDI subgroup) for the 2026 work period and will be submitted to the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) during their annual meetings on 9-10 September 2026.

1 Background

In September 2023, during a joint session of the 14th Meeting of EGTI and 11th Meeting of EGH, members agreed to establish a joint EGTI-EGH subgroup on the IDI methodology for the 2024 work period. Teddy Woodhouse International Policy Manager, OFCOM, United Kingdom (representing EGTI) and Winston Oyadomari, Senior Survey Analyst and Head of Innovation Lab, Cetic.br, Brazil (representing EGH) were appointed co-leads. The subgroup was tasked with reviewing the methodology and providing recommendations to inform any potential revision.

In September 2024, the IDI subgroup presented its report for the 2024 work period during a joint session of the 15th Meeting of EGTI and the 12th Meeting of EGH. Members agreed to extend the mandate of the subgroup for the 2025 work period. In September 2025, the IDI subgroup presented its report for the 2025 work period during a joint session of the 16th Meeting of EGTI and the 13th Meeting of EGH.

On this occasion, EGTI and EGH members agreed to extend the mandate of the subgroup for the 2026 work period. In addition, ahead of the expiration of the current methodology's validity period in 2026, members also agreed to formally initiate the revision of the IDI methodology in

accordance with PP Resolution 131. These decisions are reflected in paragraphs 18-20 of the Summary Report of the 13th Meeting of EGH. The revision process was communicated in Circular BDT/DKH/IDA/004 of 30 January 2026.

2 Working methods and objectives

In 2026, the IDI subgroup worked from February to July 2026. Its Terms of Reference 2026 were presented by the co-leads during the first meeting and adopted, with the following objectives.

The subgroup aims to discuss all aspects of the methodology of the IDI and formulate recommendations to EGTI and EGH on the following aspects:

- Conceptual framework: confirming universal and meaningful connectivity as the underpinning conceptual framework of the IDI.
- Indicator selection: reviewing the recommendations of the IDI subgroup made in 2024 and 2025 and formulating final recommendations on the indicators to be included in the IDI.
- Reference year and data coverage: reviewing the current approach and formulating recommendations on the reference year for the indicators and the criteria for country inclusion in the IDI, taking into account assessment timeliness, the number of indicators, and country coverage.
- Normalisation: reviewing the current approach and formulating recommendations related to data transformation, thresholds and goalposts.
- Aggregation and weighting: reviewing the current approach and formulating recommendations.

The subgroup established the following working methods:

- The subgroup is open to all EGH and EGTI members.
- All materials will be posted in a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel and in the dedicated folder in the BDT Document Centre.
- Invitations to each meeting will be sent at least two weeks in advance.
- Each meeting will start by a summary of recommendations agreed in the previous meeting, a brief introduction of the topic of the day, followed by a presentation of received contributions on that topic and a discussion.
- Each meeting will end with an introduction of the topic to be discussed at the next meeting and a call for contributions to that topic.
- Contributions to a topic can be shared – via email (indicators@itu.int), by using the BDT submission tool, or by posting directly on Teams - up to 10 days prior to the meeting where the topic will be discussed.
- The meeting summary will be posted no later than five days after the meeting; it will also contain the presentation to introduce the next topic.
- The activity report of the subgroup will be presented during a joint EGTI-EGH session at the annual meetings on **9-10 September 2026**.

3 Summary of meetings

The IDI subgroup met six times during the 2026 work period. Below is a succinct overview of each meeting. Refer to Annex 2, the Microsoft Teams channel or the BDT Document Centre for longer summaries.

First virtual meeting (17 February 2026)
The first meeting launched the 2026 revision cycle of the ICT Development Index (IDI) and focused on establishing the subgroup's mandate, working methods, and overall timeline. Participants reviewed the revision process leading towards a possible adoption of a revised methodology in early 2027 and reaffirmed that the IDI should continue to be grounded in the concept of universal and meaningful connectivity. The discussion confirmed that while important issues such as cybersecurity, devices, and digital skills remain part of the conceptual framework, their inclusion in the index is constrained by data availability and reliability. Members agreed to retain the existing framework, use the dedicated collaboration platforms for future work, and begin submitting proposals for indicator additions, removals, or modifications. Informal discussions also highlighted possible future work on weighting, the use of school connectivity as a proxy for digital skills, broader device indicators, and analysis of the contribution of individual indicators to overall index scores.

Second virtual meeting (17 March 2026)
The second meeting focused on proposing indicators for the revised IDI and reviewed proposals submitted by several countries and institutions. The most significant outcome was broad support for including 5G mobile network coverage in the index, subject to further methodological work on its integration with the existing mobile coverage indicators. Other proposals generated more mixed views. Participants expressed reservations about incorporating the Global Cybersecurity Index due to concerns over periodicity, methodology, and the inclusion of one composite index within another. Similar concerns arose regarding the Digital Access and Use Index, active mobile device indicators, average download throughput, and international bandwidth usage, largely because of limitations related to data availability, reliance on third-party sources, or methodological complexity. The co-chairs concluded that significant progress was made on the 5G indicator, while other proposals require further methodological or availability analysis.

Third virtual meeting (23 April 2026)
The third meeting continued the indicator selection process and concentrated on proposals relating to fixed broadband, computer ownership, digital skills, and traffic indicators. Participants examined the challenges of measuring fixed broadband penetration, noting that household-based measures would be conceptually preferable but are currently constrained by the lack of internationally comparable household data. Proposals concerning fixed broadband speed and technology breakdowns were also discussed but were considered premature without a robust baseline penetration indicator. Discussions on computer ownership and digital skills highlighted the importance of these dimensions for meaningful connectivity, while acknowledging severe limitations in international data availability. Although many participants considered these topics relevant, concerns over data quality and methodology prevented

consensus. The meeting's main decision was to recommend the inclusion of 5G mobile network coverage in the revised index, while continuing to explore possible approaches for addressing digital skills.

Fourth virtual meeting (2 June 2026)
The fourth meeting focused on two major issues: the possible use of school connectivity as a proxy for digital skills and the treatment of reference years, missing data, and estimations in the IDI. Participants engaged in an extensive debate on whether the proportion of schools connected to the Internet could serve as an interim measure of digital skills, with supporters emphasizing improved coverage and opponents warning that connectivity alone does not necessarily translate into skills acquisition. As no consensus emerged, the proposal could not advance, although members agreed that digital skills remain an important gap in the index. The meeting also reviewed the current methodology for handling missing data and found broad support for retaining the existing approach, which combines official data with documented estimation and imputation methods to preserve global coverage. Participants generally agreed that eliminating estimations would severely reduce the usefulness of the index by limiting country coverage, while emphasizing the need to continue improving data reporting and reducing reliance on estimated values over time.

Fifth virtual meeting (25 June 2026)
The fifth meeting focused on refining the methodology for the revised IDI, with discussions centred on normalisation, aggregation and weighting. Participants debated how to incorporate 5G population coverage into the mobile network coverage indicator, weighing the need to reflect technological progress against maintaining a stable methodology over the IDI's four-year cycle, but no consensus was reached. The subgroup also considered proposals to revise normalisation goalposts, including lowering the maximum value for active mobile broadband subscriptions and adopting dynamic rather than fixed goalposts for traffic indicators, with discussions highlighting the trade-offs between methodological stability, comparability over time, and responsiveness to evolving technologies. A further proposal to introduce an additional "enabler" layer within the meaningful connectivity pillar was generally viewed as adding unnecessary complexity and altering the established weighting structure, with most participants favouring the existing approach. Overall, members emphasized the importance of balancing innovation with transparency, simplicity, and comparability, while acknowledging that no final decisions would be taken at this stage. The co-chairs would launch a consultation and review written submissions before presenting recommendations at the next meeting.

Sixth virtual meeting (8 July 2026)
The sixth and final virtual meeting concluded the IDI subgroup's 2026 work on the revised methodology and reviewed next steps toward the September Expert Group meetings and subsequent Member State consultations under Resolution 131. Members confirmed recommendations to retain the Universal and Meaningful Connectivity framework, include 5G population coverage within the mobile network coverage indicator, and maintain the current approach to reference years, data coverage, estimates and imputations. However, no consensus was reached on the weighting structure of the index, the weighting by technology of the mobile coverage indicators, or the final treatment of, where relevant, fixed versus dynamic

goalposts. The final report will therefore distinguish clearly between agreed recommendations and unresolved issues, while inviting further evidence and analysis before broader consultation.

4 Topics discussed

The topics discussed during the six virtual meeting followed the order set out in the objectives of the subgroup. The meetings were informed by contributions from participants and information documents submitted by the BDT Secretariat. Annex 1 provides a full list.

Conceptual framework

The IDI subgroup reaffirmed that the IDI should continue to be grounded in the concept of universal and meaningful connectivity.

Indicator selection

The following indicators were discussed during the work period of the subgroup as potential indicators for inclusion in the index.

5G/IMT-2020 mobile network coverage received broad support to be added to the IDI, subject to later decisions on how to weight it against 3G and 4G coverage.

Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) was discussed as a possible cybersecurity indicator, but concerns were raised about its non-annual periodicity, composite-index nature, policy-input focus, and suitability for inclusion in another index; no consensus was reached and it was not pursued further.

Digital Access and Use Index (DAUI) was considered relevant for digital inclusion, but concerns about third-party data, limited country coverage, subnational availability, and lack of ITU control prevented support for inclusion.

Active mobile devices by technology was proposed to capture actual use of 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks, but participants noted that ITU does not collect the data and that methodological issues such as network fallback require further work.

Average download throughput was discussed as a quality-of-service measure, but concerns about limited official data availability, comparability, and data quality, and concerns about reliance on third-party crowdsourced data as an alternative, meant no decision was reached.

International bandwidth usage was revisited as a former IDI indicator, but declining data availability and questions about continued relevance led the group to lean against inclusion.

Fixed broadband penetration was discussed, with participants agreeing that a household-based measure would be conceptually preferable, but lack of internationally comparable household data and concerns about business subscriptions weakened the case for inclusion.

Fixed broadband speed and technology breakdowns were considered, but participants noted that these indicators would be difficult to interpret without a reliable fixed broadband penetration baseline and that advertised speeds do not necessarily reflect actual user experience.

Households with access to a computer was discussed as a device-related indicator relevant to meaningful connectivity, but participants noted limited data availability and debated whether computers remain essential given widespread mobile phone use.

Digital skills indicators were widely recognized as important, but participants highlighted major data availability and methodological challenges, including the complexity of household survey collection.

School connectivity as a proxy for digital skills was discussed in detail, with supporters citing better data coverage and links to skills acquisition, while opponents argued that school connectivity does not necessarily translate into actual digital skills; no consensus was reached.

Traffic indicators were discussed mainly in relation to whether they should remain in the index despite different goalposts from other indicators; the group agreed to revisit the issue under normalisation and goalposts rather than remove them at the indicator-selection stage.

Reference year and data coverage

The proposals on **reference year and data coverage** focused mainly on whether to retain the current approach or move to an "official data only" calculation.

India proposed calculating the IDI score using only officially available data points, but the subgroup found that this would sharply reduce country coverage—from around 161 countries under the current methodology to only 32 countries.

Participants therefore broadly supported retaining the existing approach: using official data from two years before publication where available, falling back to the previous year's official data when needed, applying the specific one-year lag for GNI data in affordability indicators, requiring official data for at least half of the indicators for country inclusion, and using documented estimates or imputations only when no recent official data are available.

The subgroup also reaffirmed that Member States may reject ITU estimates, in which case they would be excluded from the IDI because a complete dataset is required.

Overall, the recommended approach balances timeliness, transparency, and global coverage, while encouraging continued efforts to improve reporting and reduce reliance on estimates over time.

Goalposts and normalisation

The discussion around **goalposts and normalisation** centred on how to transform indicator values into comparable scores while preserving interpretability, stability and comparability over time.

Participants debated whether to revise the goalpost for active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants from 150 to 100, as proposed by Egypt, but several opposed this because values above 100 are common and a lower ceiling would reduce the indicator's ability to distinguish among higher-performing countries.

A second major issue concerned the traffic indicators, which lack a natural maximum and therefore require methodological choices on how to set goalposts. Qatar proposed relying on observed 95th percentiles updated every year, rather than on fixed, but projected goalposts, arguing that this would better reflect actual data trends, while other participants cautioned that

annually changing benchmarks would weaken year-to-year comparability because score changes could reflect movements in the benchmark rather than real performance.

The subgroup therefore recognized a trade-off between responsiveness to technological change and methodological stability. The informal consultation after the fifth meeting showed support for keeping goalposts fixed during the methodology's validity period, including for traffic indicators and active mobile broadband subscriptions, but participants agreed that further analytical work is needed before deciding the precise method for setting those fixed goalposts.

Aggregation and weighting

The discussion around **aggregation and weighting** focused on two main questions: how to integrate 5G into the existing mobile network coverage indicator, and whether to revise the broader weighting structure of the IDI.

Participants reviewed several proposals for weighting 3G, 4G and 5G coverage. China proposed shifting weight away from 3G toward 4G and 5G, Egypt, supported by Saudi Arabia, proposed retaining all three technologies with weights of 30% for 3G, 50% for 4G and 20% for 5G, the UAE supported equal weighting across 3G, 4G and 5G, and India proposed a dynamic weighting model that would gradually increase the weight of 5G over the four-year validity period. The discussion highlighted a trade-off between reflecting technological progress and preserving methodological stability and comparability over time. Many participants were cautious about annual changes in weights, while others argued that the rapid transition to 5G justified a forward-looking approach; no consensus was reached.

The subgroup also discussed India's proposal to introduce an additional "enabler" layer within the meaningful connectivity pillar, grouping indicators under three sub-pillars, infrastructure, affordability and devices, before aggregating them into the pillar score. Supporters saw this as more closely aligned with the conceptual structure of universal and meaningful connectivity, but several participants argued that it would add complexity, alter the existing weighting structure significantly, and reduce the transparency and simplicity of the index. Most interventions favoured retaining the existing two-pillar structure with equal weighting of indicators within each pillar. The informal consultation after the fifth meeting confirmed that views remained divided on both the overall weighting structure and the weighting of 5G within the mobile coverage indicator. As a result, the subgroup agreed not to make a recommendation on these issues at this stage and to present the competing proposals transparently for further evidence-gathering and broader Member State consultation.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

The IDI subgroup makes the following recommendation for each objective identified in the terms of references:

Objective: Conceptual framework

The IDI subgroup reaffirmed that the IDI should continue to be grounded in the concept of universal and meaningful connectivity.

Objective: Indicator selection

The IDI subgroup recommends including the indicator "Percentage of population covered by at least a 5G/IMT-2020 mobile network" in the index, integrated with the existing mobile network coverage indicators. Other proposed indicators face unresolved data availability, methodological, reliability, or governance concerns.

Objective: Reference year and data coverage

The IDI subgroup recommends retaining the existing approach, which combines official data with documented estimation and imputation methods to preserve global coverage.

Objective: Goalposts and normalisation

The subgroup tended towards fixed goalposts to preserve comparability over time but did not take a final decision, and requested further analysis on how to set them for traffic indicators and active mobile broadband subscriptions.

Objective: Aggregation and weighting

No consensus was reached on aggregation and weighting, with views divided on how to weight 5G within mobile network coverage and whether to retain the current two-pillar structure or introduce an additional enabler layer.

Unresolved issues

The main unresolved methodological issues concern areas where the subgroup found broad relevance but did not reach consensus on implementation. These include:

- The **weighting structure of the IDI**, especially whether to retain equal weighting of indicators within the two existing pillars or introduce an additional "enabler" layer under meaningful connectivity;
- The **weighting by technology within the mobile network coverage indicator**, where – among several proposals – views remained mostly divided between equal weighting of 3G, 4G and 5G and a more gradual approach assigning 30% to 3G, 50% to 4G and 20% to 5G; and
- The **treatment of goalposts for indicators without a natural maximum**, particularly traffic indicators and active mobile broadband subscriptions, where participants supported stability but requested further analysis on whether fixed, projected or observed percentile-based goalposts should be used.[1]
- Several conceptually relevant indicators—such as digital skills, school connectivity, fixed broadband penetration, quality-of-service measures, cybersecurity, computer ownership and third-party data-based indicators—remain unresolved for future work because of data availability, comparability, methodological reliability, or governance concerns.

[1] An information document on this subject has since been uploaded to the Microsoft Teams channel and the dedicated folder in the BDT Document Centre.

Next steps

The next steps are to **present this subgroup report** to the joint EGTI/EGH annual meetings on **9–10 September 2026**.

Before September, participants are invited to identify any additional evidence or analysis needed on the unresolved methodological questions, especially weighting, the treatment of 5G within the mobile coverage indicator, and goalposts for indicators without a natural maximum. After the Expert Group discussions, the revised methodology is expected to proceed to broader **Member State consultation under Resolution 131**, with contentious issues to be addressed in later expert group discussions before a possible approval process in early 2027.

Annex 1 List of contributions

Below is a list of all received contributions, grouped by theme, with the name of the submitter indicated in parentheses. All contributions can be found in the ITU document centre and in the IDI subgroup's Teams channel.

Indicator selection

- Inclusion of percentage of population covered by at least a 5G/IMT-2020 mobile network in the mobile network coverage indicator (China, Tunisia, UAE)
- Inclusion of fixed-broadband subscriptions per household (Egypt)
- Inclusion of fixed-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (UAE)
- Inclusion of fixed broadband subscription by speed >10Mbps per fixed broadband subscriptions (India)
- Inclusion of fibre-to-the-home/building Internet subscriptions per fixed broadband subscriptions (UAE)
- Inclusion of the Global Cybersecurity Index (India)
- Inclusion of school connectivity as a proxy for digital skills (Russian Federation)
- Inclusion of the percentage of active mobile devices actually using 2G, 3G, 4G, or 5G networks (Tunisia)
- Inclusion of percentage of households with a computer (UAE)
- Inclusion of international bandwidth usage per Internet user (bits/s) (UAE)
- Inclusion of average download throughput for fixed and mobile (UAE)
- Inclusion of a dual-scoring digital skills indicator (basic and comprehensive competence) (University of Cape Town)
- Inclusion of a digital access and use index (DAUI) (University of Cape Town)

Reference year and data coverage

- Calculate the IDI score with officially available data points only (India)

Goalposts

- Only use 95th percentiles for goalposts instead of projected percentiles (Qatar)
- Modify the goalpost for active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants to 100 instead of 150 (Egypt)
- Remove the mobile broadband Internet traffic per mobile broadband subscriptions due to an asymmetric goalpost (Egypt)
- Remove the fixed broadband Internet traffic per fixed broadband subscriptions due to an asymmetric goalpost (Egypt)

Weighting and aggregation

- Weighting proposals for the mobile network coverage indicator:

Year	*At least 3G*	*At least 4G*	*At least 5G/IMT-2020*	*Proposer*
	40%	60%	0%	Current
	0%	40%	60%	China
	30%	50%	20%	Egypt
	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	UAE
2027	15%	45%	40%	India
2028	10%	35%	55%	
2029	5%	30%	65%	
2030	0%	25%	75%	

- Proposal for weighting and aggregation of the indicators into their pillars and the overall IDI (India)

Pillar	*Enabler*	*Indicator*	*Proposed weight*	*Current weight*
Universal connectivity (1/2)	Universality (1/1)	Individual Internet use (1/3)	1/6	1/6
		Household Internet access (1/3)	1/6	1/6
		Mobile broadband subscriptions (1/3)	1/6	1/6
Meaningful connectivity (1/2)	Infrastructure (1/3)	Mobile network coverage (1/3)	1/18	1/12
		Fixed broadband traffic (1/3)	1/18	1/12
		Mobile broadband traffic (1/3)	1/18	1/12
	Affordability (1/3)	Fixed broadband basket (1/2)	1/12	1/12
		Mobile data and voice h.c. basket (1/2)	1/12	1/12
	Device (1/3)	Mobile phone ownership (1/1)	1/6	1/12

Other contributions

- Proposal for revision of PP Resolution 131 (Russian Federation)
- The ITU Secretariat to prepare a Principal Component Analysis of the IDI to transform the dataset into principal components and rank them according to importance (Qatar)
- The ITU Secretariat to prepare an overview of all ITU's indices and rankings to provide insight into ITU's analytical landscape (Qatar)
- The ITU Secretariat to prepare white papers on the requirements for including 3rd party data sources (e.g., Ookla or Netcraft) and analyze the relevance of ITU collecting QoS and cybersecurity data (Qatar)

BDT information documents

The BDT Secretariat provided five information documents to assist in the discussions. These documents can also be found on the ITU Document Centre and the Teams Channel.

The following documents were prepared:

- Information document on data availability
- Information document on cybersecurity
- Information document: Statistical analysis of the IDI indicator framework
- Information document on ITU indices
- Information document on goalposts for the traffic indicators and the mobile broadband penetration indicator

Annex 2 Meeting summaries

Summary of the first virtual meeting (17 February 2026)

The meeting was opened by co-lead Teddy Woodhouse (Ofcom, United Kingdom), who welcomed participants and outlined the objectives for the 2026 work cycle. It was noted that co-lead Winston Oyadomari (Cetic.br, Brazil) was unable to attend but would join for the next session. The primary goals of the meeting were to review the revision process, agree on the subgroup's terms of reference (ToR), and revisit the conceptual framework of the index.

Overview of the IDI revision process and timeline

The co-chair explained that the subgroup's mandate is derived from Resolution 131 (rev. Bucharest 2022). Following a decision by the expert groups in September 2025 to formally start the revision of the IDI methodology, the subgroup is tasked with providing a proposal for a revised IDI methodology, in line with its terms of reference.

The proposed timeline aims for six meetings between February and July, and a final subgroup report by early August 2026, to be presented to the EGTI/EGH meetings in September. After discussion during the expert group meetings, a formal consultation with Member States will follow in October, with a dedicated EGTI/EGH meeting in December to address contentious issues. A final consultation in January 2027 would seek approval of the revised methodology by Member States. Adoption requires approval of at least 70% of responding Member States. Subject to such approval, the 2027 edition of the IDI, based on the revised methodology, could be published in June 2027. If the revised methodology is not approved, the understanding within the group is that the existing methodology would continue to apply.

Review of Terms of Reference (ToR) and working methods

The co-chair introduced the Terms of Reference and presented the objectives, focusing on a holistic review of the index, covering conceptual framework, indicator selection and all methodological aspects such as normalisation, aggregation, and weighting. Key points raised during the discussion included:

- Goalposts: It was confirmed that the standardisation of goalposts would be addressed under the "normalisation" agenda item.
- Price baskets: Participants discussed the role of affordability indicators. It was clarified that while the subgroup cannot redefine the price baskets themselves – as they are a separate ITU statistical product – it can recommend which price basket to utilize within the index.
- Working methods: The group will continue to use the dedicated Microsoft Teams channel for exchanging information. In parallel, the BDT staff will post all the material in the BDT Document Center. To ensure methodological rigor, it was agreed that the BDT staff would be involved as needed to provide objective assessments and supplementary information papers.

Revisiting the conceptual framework

In the second part of the meeting, the group focused on the first aspect of the IDI methodology: the conceptual framework underpinning the development of the index.

The group reaffirmed that the conceptual framework of the IDI remains based on measuring universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC).

- In-scope vs. out-of-scope: While some factors like policy, regulation, and cybersecurity are currently out of scope for the IDI, it was suggested to refine the framework descriptions to reference existing ITU products that cover these areas, such as the G5 Benchmark.
- Security, devices, and skills: These remain conceptually vital to meaningful connectivity, but inclusion of indicators for these enablers is currently limited by data availability and reliability.
- Consensus: The subgroup agreed to retain the current framework, with the understanding that data availability remains a critical threshold for any new indicator proposals.

Next steps and indicator selection

The co-lead encouraged members to begin submitting contributions for indicator selection – the focus of the second meeting – by the 7th of March, respecting a 10-day deadline ahead of the meeting. Proposals can include modifications, additions, or removals of indicators. Members were urged to use the provided template to address four main criteria: relevance, availability, reliability, and the use of official data sources. Regarding 5G mobile network coverage, it was noted that while there is support for its inclusion in principle, and was the basis of EGTI's and EGH's endorsement in 2025 of a revision of the IDI, the subgroup needs to precisely define the indicator and normalisation methods during this cycle.

Informal discussion on potential revisions

Following the formal agenda, members held an informal exchange on several proposals to be explored in future meetings:

- Weighting: There was a suggestion to consider equal weighting for the various dimensions of universality and meaningful connectivity to incentivize data collection for missing enablers like skills and security.
- Proxies for skills: There also was a discussion to use school connectivity as a potential proxy for digital skills, noting its relationship with education levels and infrastructure access.
- Device definitions: A participant proposed expanding device-related indicators beyond "owning a mobile phone" to include the use of laptops, PCs, or collective access points to improve data availability.
- Statistical analysis: A request was made for the BDT to perform a statistical analysis showing the current contribution of each indicator to the total composite score to inform future weighting discussions.

Summary of the second virtual meeting (17 March 2026)

The second meeting of the IDI subgroup in 2026, held on 17 March, focused on indicator selection for the next iteration of the ICT Development Index (IDI) methodology for the 2027–2030 period. The meeting, co-chaired by Winston Oyadomari and Teddy Woodhouse, reviewed contributions from India, Tunisia, UAE, the University of Cape Town (UCT), China, and Egypt, with some of these submissions postponed to the next meeting owing to lack of time.

Review of submissions

The co-chairs presented a list of proposed indicators, noting that some had been discussed in previous iterations.

Detailed discussion of proposed indicators

- **5G/IMT-2020 mobile network coverage:** 5G mobile network coverage was noted for its high availability and adherence to the conceptual model. There was broad support from participants and consensus to move forward, pending future discussion on weighting and balancing with 3G and 4G/LTE mobile network coverage.

- **Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI):** The proposal received limited support among participants. Arguments for its inclusion to represent the cybersecurity dimension of the UMC framework were counterbalanced by concerns regarding its periodicity, noting the GCI is not updated annually, opposition to including a composite index within another index, and arguments that the IDI should rely on objective, factual data showing outcomes rather than policy inputs. As an alternative, one participant suggested considering the regulation survey (Section 8), particularly its cybersecurity-related questions. The co-chairs concluded there was no consensus on the GCI, suggesting further consultation. The BDT Secretariat was tasked with providing additional information following consultations with the GCI team and the Regulatory and Market Environment Division.

- **Digital Access and Use Index (DAUI):** This index focuses on household survey data to measure digital inclusion. While the framework was praised, the co-chairs noted that PP Resolution 131 prioritizes official statistics over third-party data. Historical precedent from 2017 also cautioned against using indices outside ITU's direct control. In addition, data for this index are only available for a limited number of countries – often at the subnational level.

- **Active mobile devices by technology (2G, 3G, 4G, 5G):** This indicator was proposed to provide a more accurate picture of real technology adoption beyond simple coverage. It was noted that this data is not collected by ITU and that it might add excessive detail to the mobile network dimension. Technical concerns were also raised about "fallback" issues where devices switch between generations. The chairs concluded this requires more methodological work at the expert group level.

- **Average download throughput:** The discussion centred on the dilemma between using third-party crowdsourced quality of service data, which are broadly available but are not official data versus official ITU data, which have lower availability and are of mixed quality. The BDT Secretariat reminded participants that EGTI could not reach a

conclusion on how to refine methodology to ensure international comparability for indicators on quality of during its 2024 and 2025 meetings. The limited quality of available data, along with the reliance on third-party private sources, further constrains the ability to produce acceptable estimates. No final decision was reached.

- **International bandwidth usage:** This was a return to a previous IDI indicator with a historical collection by ITU, but concerns were raised about declining data availability and relevance, with the group leaning against inclusion.

Conclusion and next steps

The co-chair concluded that significant progress was made on the 5G indicator, while other proposals require further methodological or availability analysis.

- **Next meeting:** Scheduled for April 23, 2026, from 12:45 to 14:15 CEST.
- **Agenda:** The subgroup will prioritize discussions on fixed broadband, devices and digital skills. Time permitting, it will start the discussion on reference year and data coverage. A presentation of the introduction to this subject has been added to the dedicated Microsoft Teams channel and the ITU document centre.
- **Submissions:** Participants may submit further proposals using the official template until April 13, 2026.
- **Goal:** The group aims to finalize a firm list of recommended indicators by the end of the next session.

Summary of the third virtual meeting (23 April 2026)

The third meeting of the IDI subgroup in 2026, held on 23 April, focused on finalising the indicator selection for the next iteration of the ICT Development Index (IDI) methodology for the 2027–2030 period. The meeting, co-chaired by Winston Oyadomari and Teddy Woodhouse, reviewed contributions from India, UAE, the University of Cape Town (UCT), and Egypt, while the Russian Federation proposed an additional indicator during the meeting.

Review of submissions

Following a brief recap of the previous meeting, the discussion primarily revolved around the feasibility and limitations of several proposed indicators:

- **Fixed broadband penetration:** The challenge is how to express broadband subscriptions in a meaningful way. Ideally, participants agreed that broadband should be measured relative to households, because fixed connections are typically shared within homes. However, in practice, reliable data on the number of households is not available for most countries: official comparable data from the UN Population Division for the number of households is only available for 35 countries in the Database on Household Size and Composition 2022[2], making it difficult to implement. An alternative is to calculate subscriptions per population, which is easier because population data is widely available. But this method is considered less accurate, since it does not reflect how fixed broadband is actually used and can distort comparisons between countries with different household sizes. Concerns were also raised about the direct relevance of subscription data to households as business connections are also included, potentially distorting results. In the end, there was a general sense that including a flawed indicator could undermine the credibility of the index, while excluding it leaves an important aspect of connectivity unmeasured.
- **Speed and technology breakdowns:** There were proposals to include fixed broadband breakdowns by speed and technology, expressed as a share of total fixed broadband subscriptions (i.e., number of fixed-broadband subscriptions with an advertised speed of at least 10 Mbit/s per total fixed broadband subscriptions). However, speakers noted that including quality or technology indicators is problematic for multiple reasons. First, because the base penetration indicator for fixed broadband is missing. Without that baseline, including speed or technology indicators could skew the results by emphasizing quality over access. Second, because the indicator measures advertised speed, rather than actual speeds available for the users. For this reason, these proposals were also set aside for the time being. The subgroup also revisited the idea of using data from third-party providers, particularly for measuring Internet speed. While such data could help fill gaps where official statistics are lacking, there were significant concerns about reliability and governance. External providers may change their methods, stop publishing data, or operate without transparency, which could introduce instability into the index. Although there was some openness to exploring this further, no agreement was reached.

[2] https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/household-size-and-composition.

- **Computer ownership:** The group discussed the relevance of measuring households with a computer. There is evidence that a diversity of devices is related to a higher level of skills and a wider scope of activities performed, but there were also arguments that mobile phones have largely replaced computers for many users. Participants highlighted the lack of sufficient data being available.
- **Digital skills:** Digital skills were widely acknowledged as an important dimension of meaningful connectivity, but here too there were major practical challenges. Measuring skills requires complex surveys with many questions, and only a small number of countries currently report such data. Participants noted that the effort required to collect this information is high. Some participants suggested introducing these indicators as candidates for future inclusion. Some suggested using specific competence areas where data availability was somewhat higher as candidate indicators to encourage future data collection. A proposal was made to use school connectivity as a proxy for digital skills.
- **Traffic indicators:** A proposal was made to exclude traffic indicators due to the use of different goalposts compared to most of the other indicators. This led to a broader discussion on whether goalposts should be redefined rather than excluding the indicators entirely. The group agreed to revisit this methodological issue in the fifth meeting of the subgroup.

Despite extensive discussion, no new indicators discussed in the meeting reached the level of consensus required for inclusion. The only item with clear support remains the earlier proposal on 5G coverage. On all other topics, the group either faced data limitations, methodological concerns, or both. There was a shared recognition that many of the proposed indicators are important and relevant, but not yet mature enough to be incorporated into the index without risking its credibility.

Decisions taken

- **5G mobile network coverage:** The subgroup decided to recommend incorporating 5G mobile network coverage into the index and including it in upcoming methodological considerations.
- **Global Cybersecurity Index:** Based on the discussions and information based on the related information document, the group decided not to bring the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) back for further discussion in this cycle.
- **Other indicators:** No consensus was reached for the inclusion of fixed broadband penetration, fixed broadband by speed, fixed broadband by technology, computer ownership, or digital skills indicators at this stage due to data availability and methodological concerns. School connectivity as a proxy for digital skills will be discussed at the next meeting.

Conclusion and next steps

- **Index landscape overview:** The Secretariat will work on a document listing the various ITU indices and how they relate to one another.

- **Next meeting:** Scheduled for May 27, 2026, from 13:00 to 14:30 CEST.
- **Agenda:** After discussing school connectivity as a proxy indicator for digital skills, the subgroup will discuss reference year and data coverage. A presentation of the introduction to this subject has been added to the dedicated Microsoft Teams channel and the ITU document centre.
- **Submissions:** Participants may submit proposals on this subject using the official template until May 17, 2026.

Summary of the fourth virtual meeting (2 June 2026)

The fourth meeting of the IDI subgroup in 2026, held on 2 June, focused on finalising the indicator selection and on discussing reference year and data coverage for the next iteration of the ICT Development Index (IDI) methodology for the 2027–2030 period. The meeting, chaired by Winston Oyadomari, reviewed contributions from the Russian Federation and India.

School connectivity as a proxy for digital skills

The first agenda item concerned a proposal to use the proportion of schools with Internet access for pedagogical purposes as a proxy indicator for digital skills. The proposal was motivated by the fact that the digital skills indicator recommended by ITU for collection through household surveys currently lacks sufficient data coverage across countries to meet inclusion requirements for the IDI. The proposed school connectivity indicator is sourced from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), not directly from ITU. Data are available for around 100 countries for 2024 or 2023.

Supporters argued that:

- Digital skills are an essential component of universal and meaningful connectivity and should be represented in the IDI, even if this requires a proxy indicator.
- School connectivity is linked to opportunities for acquiring digital skills.
- The indicator has significantly better international coverage than existing digital skills measures.
- Proxy indicators have been used in previous versions of the IDI.
- The indicator could serve as an interim solution until digital skills data collected from household surveys become more widely available.

Opponents raised several concerns:

- Internet connectivity in schools does not necessarily translate into actual digital skills acquisition.
- Experiences from some countries show that schools may be connected but still lack effective usage or adoption of in the curricula, training, or internal infrastructure.
- Using a poor proxy risks producing a misleading picture of countries' digital capabilities.
- The indicator comes from UNESCO rather than directly collected by ITU from Member States.
- There are potentially better proxy measures available, including indicators related to online activities such as the use of digital services use or e-commerce participation.

Several participants stressed that a better solution is to increase efforts to collect and report data according to ITU's established digital skills indicators methodology rather than relying on proxies. Examples were provided showing that countries with universal school connectivity can still have relatively modest levels of measured digital skills.

No consensus emerged regarding the inclusion of the school connectivity indicator. Since the subgroup operates on a consensus basis, the proposal could therefore not advance. Nevertheless, there was broad agreement that digital skills remain a critical missing element of the IDI and that the issue should continue to receive attention.

The debate also touched on the broader question of how data from organizations outside ITU should be handled for the purposes of the IDI (incl. data produced by other UN agencies or originating from private-sector or third-party sources).

Reference year, data coverage, and estimations

The subgroup reviewed the current methodology for handling missing data and aligning reference years across indicators.

At present:

- The IDI uses official data from two years prior to publication. In order to increase the number of official data points used, rather than relying on estimates, if an official value is not available for two years prior to publication but available for the preceding year, the official value for that preceding year is used.
- Affordability indicators use Gross National Income (GNI) data for the denominator from an additional year earlier because at the time of compiling the price basket data, GNI data are not available yet for the same reference year as the price data.
- Countries must have official data for at least half of the indicators to be included in the IDI.
- Missing values are either estimated or imputed by the Secretariat.

The chair presented evidence showing the consequences of eliminating estimations and imputations. Under a strict "official data only" approach, only 32 countries would be included in the IDI, compared with approximately 161 countries under the current methodology.

Participants reviewed statistics showing that:

- Around 20% of data points are currently estimated or imputed.
- Household survey indicators account for most of the estimated values because of limited reporting.
- Traffic indicators account for most imputations.

The Secretariat emphasized that estimation methodologies have been documented and published and that Member States are consulted before estimated values are used.

A proposal to calculate the IDI using only officially reported data received little support.

Participants generally agreed that the current balance between coverage and estimation is reasonable. There was broad recognition that a global index would lose much of its usefulness if coverage were reduced to only a small number of countries.

At the same time, participants reaffirmed the importance of continuing efforts to improve the timeliness of reporting and reduce dependence on estimated values where possible. This applies in particular to the household indicators and the traffic indicators.

Preparations for next meeting

The chair introduced the topics that will be discussed in detail at the next meeting:

- Goalposts and thresholds.
- Treatment of outliers.
- Indicator normalisation.
- Aggregation and weighting, including incorporation of the indicator *Share of population covered by 5G/IMT-2020 mobile networks* into the mobile network coverage indicator and determination of its weighting.

Participants were invited to submit written contributions before the next meeting, noting that contributions from Egypt have already been received previously, and that Qatar submitted a detailed proposal in 2025.

Additional discussion on Resolution 131

At the end of the meeting, a proposal relating to ITU PP Resolution 131 was briefly presented.

The proposal seeks to:

- Clarify that IDI calculations should primarily rely on data supplied by Member States.
- Allow use of data from other UN organizations when equivalent ITU data are unavailable.
- Promote greater consistency in reference years across all data sources.
- Reduce duplication between Resolution 131 and WTDC Resolution 8.
- Strengthen collaboration between ITU study groups and statistical expert groups when developing future indicators.

The subgroup did not discuss these proposals in detail, as they fall outside its mandate, but members took note of the suggestions.

Next steps

- **Next meeting:** Scheduled for June 25, 2026, from 13:00 to 14:30 CEST.
- **Agenda:** The subgroup will discuss normalisation, aggregation and weighting. A presentation of the introduction to this subject has been added to the dedicated Microsoft Teams channel and the ITU document centre.
- **Submissions:** Participants may submit proposals on this subject until June 15, 2026.

Summary of the fifth virtual meeting (25 June 2026)

The fifth virtual meeting of the Joint EGTI–EGH IDI Subgroup, held on 25 June, focused on finalizing key methodological aspects of the revised index, particularly normalisation, weighting, and aggregation.

Weighting of mobile network coverage indicator

The first part of the meeting was devoted to the inclusion of 5G population coverage within the mobile network coverage indicator. Participants reviewed proposals from China, Egypt, and India on how to weight 3G, 4G, and 5G coverage. China proposed replacing 3G with a weighting split between 4G and 5G, Egypt suggested retaining all three technologies with a modest weight for 5G, while India proposed a dynamic weighting system that would gradually increase the importance of 5G over the four-year validity period of the methodology. The discussion highlighted a tension between reflecting technological progress and preserving the comparability of the index over time. Many participants expressed concerns that changing weights annually could undermine the stability of the methodology and conflict with the principle that the IDI methodology should remain fixed throughout its four-year cycle. Others argued that the rapid global transition from 3G to 5G justified a more forward-looking approach. No consensus was reached, although many participants favoured a cautious introduction of 5G into the index, in line with the Egyptian proposal (30% for 3G, 50% for 4G and 20% for 5G) or equal weighting across technologies.

Normalisation and goalposts

The subgroup then turned to the issue of normalisation and goalposts. Egypt proposed reducing the goalpost for active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants from 150 to 100, arguing that this would align the indicator with other indicators that use a maximum score of 100 and would simplify interpretation. Several participants disagreed with this proposal, noting that mobile broadband subscriptions are a proxy measure rather than a direct measure of usage and that values above 100 are common because individuals often hold multiple subscriptions. Reducing the goalpost to 100 would compress differences among higher-performing countries and reduce the indicator's ability to distinguish between levels of performance. Participants generally agreed that maintaining a higher threshold would help preserve the indicator's discriminatory power.

Another debate concerned the treatment of traffic indicators and the use of dynamic versus fixed goalposts. Qatar argued that the methodology should consistently apply the 95th percentile approach to all relevant indicators, including traffic indicators, and questioned the use of projected goalposts that remain fixed over the four-year methodology period. The argument was that actual data trends often differ from projections and that annual recalculation based on observed values would provide a more realistic benchmark. In response, the Secretariat explained that dynamic goalposts would make year-to-year comparisons more difficult because changes in scores could reflect shifts in the benchmark rather than genuine improvements in performance. The discussion clarified the trade-off between methodological stability and responsiveness to changing technological realities. While participants acknowledged shortcomings in the current projections for traffic indicators, there was no agreement to move to a fully dynamic system, or whether to apply a projection of the goalpost.

Aggregation and weighting

The final substantive discussion concerned a proposal from India to introduce an additional "enabler" layer within the meaningful connectivity pillar. Under this proposal, indicators would first be grouped into thematic enablers, with equal weighting assigned to each enabler rather than directly to each indicator. The proposal was presented as a way to better reflect the conceptual structure of universal and meaningful connectivity. However, several participants argued that this would add complexity to an index deliberately designed to remain simple and transparent. Concerns were also raised that introducing a new layer would significantly alter the weighting structure and represent a major conceptual change at a late stage of the review process. Most interventions favoured retaining the existing two-pillar structure and equal weighting of indicators within each pillar.

Throughout the discussions, participants consistently highlighted the need to balance innovation and technological relevance with methodological stability, transparency, simplicity, and the ability to compare results across countries and over time.

Overall, the meeting did not result in final decisions on the issues discussed. Instead, it served as a final opportunity for members to present views and provide feedback on competing proposals. The co-chairs emphasized that they would send out a consultation and review all interventions and written submissions before formulating recommendations.

Next steps

- The co-chairs will send out a **consultation** on some of the topics.
- **Next meeting:** Scheduled for July 8, 2026, from 13:00 to 14:30 CEST.
- **Agenda:** The co-chairs will revisit the topics discussed under normalisation, aggregation and weighting, taking into account written contributions as well.
- **Submissions:** Participants may submit contributions by e-mail to indicators@itu.int until July 3, 2026.

Summary of the sixth virtual meeting (8 July 2026)

The sixth and final virtual meeting of the Joint EGTI–EGH Subgroup focused on concluding the subgroup's work on the revision of the ICT Development Index (IDI) methodology and outlining the next steps in the broader approval process. The Chairs reviewed the timeline leading to the September meeting of the Expert Groups, subsequent Member State consultations, and the expected adoption process under Resolution 131, emphasizing that the end of the subgroup's work does not conclude discussions on the revised methodology.

A major part of the meeting was devoted to presenting the results of the informal consultation conducted after the fifth meeting on normalization, weighting and aggregation. The consultation indicated support for maintaining fixed goalposts throughout a validity period rather than updating them annually, as this better preserves comparability over time. This concerns mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, as well as the two traffic indicators which lack a theoretical maximum value. However, participants agreed that further analytical work is needed to determine the most appropriate method for setting those goalposts.

The consultation produced no consensus on two other methodological issues. First, views remained divided on whether the weighting structure should continue assigning equal weights to all indicators within each pillar or be reorganized around "enablers" such as infrastructure, affordability and devices. Second, participants were split on how to incorporate 5G into the mobile network coverage indicator, with support divided between equal weighting of the 3G, 4G and 5G coverage indicators, and Egypt's proposal to assign 30% to 3G, 50% to 4G and 20% to 5G. Several participants stressed that the limited number of responses to the informal consultation did not provide a sufficient basis for recommending any of these options and called for additional evidence and broader consultation before decisions are taken.

The discussion also addressed the role of the informal consultation results in the final report. Several participants cautioned against presenting voting figures in a way that could be interpreted as majority decisions where no consensus exists. The Chairs agreed that the report should clearly state where consensus had not been reached, present all proposals transparently, and avoid implying recommendations based solely on relative levels of support.

The subgroup reviewed the recommendations on which consensus had been achieved. These include retaining the Universal and Meaningful Connectivity conceptual framework, incorporating the indicator “share of population covered by a 5G/IMT-2020 network” within the mobile network coverage indicator, and maintaining the current approach to reference years, data coverage, and the use of estimates and imputations to maximise country coverage while preserving the possibility for Member States to opt out in accordance with Resolution 131. The Chairs also presented a draft approach to indicator goalposts, noting that additional work is still required for traffic indicators and potentially for active mobile broadband subscriptions, following comments received during the meeting.

Throughout the discussion, participants highlighted the need for stronger analytical justification for future methodological decisions, particularly regarding weighting approaches and the choice between fixed and dynamic goalposts. The Chairs invited members to identify evidence gaps that should be addressed before the September meetings so that more informed decisions can be made during the wider consultation process.

Key decisions and action points

- The subgroup confirmed its recommendation to retain the Universal and Meaningful Connectivity framework as the conceptual basis of the IDI.
- The subgroup agreed to recommend the inclusion of 5G population coverage within the mobile network coverage indicator.
- The current methodology for reference years, data coverage, estimates and imputations will be recommended without change.
- No recommendation will be made at this stage on the weighting structure of the index, the weighting of 5G within the mobile coverage indicator, or the final approach to fixed versus dynamic goalposts, as consensus has not been reached.
- The Chairs will prepare a draft report reflecting both areas of agreement and outstanding issues, transparently documenting all proposals while clearly indicating where no consensus exists.
- Participants were invited to identify additional evidence and analysis needed to resolve the remaining methodological questions before the September Expert Group meetings and the subsequent Member State consultation process.